

# I N S I D E R



*Creative Nation* statement. The ABA has been asked to consult and advise the Minister on the administration of the Fund.

## AUSTRALIAN CONTENT

The Australian Content sub-section is responsible for monitoring compliance with the Australian content standards and conducting reviews of the standards from time to time. Australian content standards set minimum levels to be achieved by commercial television in broadcasting Australian produced programs and advertisements.

At the present time the ABA is involved in a major review of the Australian content standard for programs. The ABA issued a discussion paper in mid-1994 as part of the review and consulted widely with interested parties. It has received more than fifty submissions

on how best to revise the standard. As a result, the ABA is currently engaged in

**T**he Standards section administers the ABA's program standards. The standards principally relate to Australian content on commercial television and to children's programs on commercial and community television. These are the two areas where the ABA is required by legislation to impose standards on broadcasters, rather than to supervise self-regulatory codes of practice.

The section had carriage of the ABA's anti-siphoning investigation earlier this year and has ongoing responsibility for this issue as it involves the ABA. The Minister for Communications and the Arts has indicated that the ABA should continue to advise him in relation to the exercise of his powers to list events under section 115 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* and to monitor developments in the acquisition of sporting rights.

Standards section is also responsible for managing consultation with the industry on the establishment of the Commercial Televi-

sion Production Fund. The Fund is an initiative of the Federal Government's



**The Standards Section team of the ABA:** Australian Content Sub-section (top left)—Anrew Poole, Kay Wilkins, Deborah Sims, Rosalie O'Neale, Nick Herd (Manager) and Robyn Selby; Children's Television Sub-section (above)—Val Hurley, Josie Tomas, Liz Gilchrist, Nadia Mencinski and Lachlan Habgood.

further consultation before releasing its draft standard for final comment.

The Australian content sub-section monitors compliance with the standards on a regular basis, collecting information from licensees on the number of hours of Australian programs they broadcast each year. This information is regularly processed and made available for publication.

The condition on pay TV licences that require predominantly drama channels to allocate ten per cent of program expenditure to the production of new Australian drama is another monitoring responsibility of the sub-section.

### **CHILDREN'S TELEVISION**

The Children's Television sub-section is responsible for the administration of the Children's Television Standards (CTS), which aim to ensure children have access to a variety of quality television programs. At the moment these apply only to commercial television, although the standards for community television will be determined when these services become licensed. The Children's Television sub-section also carries responsibility for any review of the CTS.

The CTS require minimum levels of C- and P-classified children's programming. Classified programs must satisfy a special set of criteria, set out in the CTS, which aim to ensure that the programs are made specifically for children and of a high quality.

Staff assess applications for classification against these criteria, seeking advice from consultants with expertise in particular areas, such as early childhood development or scriptwriting, when needed. A member of the ABA makes the final decision on a program's classification.

Staff in the Children's Television sub-section liaise with and provide advice to producers, broadcasters, academics, special interest groups and members of the public about the CTS and related children's television issues.

The sub-section is also involved in a variety of activities related to children's television, such as the World Summit on Television and Children in March 1995 and the Producers' Forum, in March 1995, which is being held in conjunction with the Festival of Television for Australian Children. ☐

## **CREATIVE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING**

**The Commonwealth Government's cultural policy statement was released by the Prime Minister, Mr Keating and the Minister for Communications and the Arts, Mr Lee on the 18 October 1994.**

The statement is designed to ensure a new direction for the arts and culture in Australia and commits the Government to more than \$250 million new funding for the arts and cultural activities over the next four years.

Initiatives announced in the statement include:

- \$84 million for multimedia programs (over four years);
- \$60 million for the television production fund (over three years);
- \$13 million for the SBS production fund (over four years);
- more than \$25 million in increased funding for the Australia Council;
- \$14.45 million to establish the National Institute for Indigenous Performing Arts in Brisbane;
- \$8.8 million to set up a National Academy of Music Performance in Melbourne; and
- the establishment of the National Gallery of Aboriginal Australia.

### **AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION PRODUCTION FUND**

The Government is to establish the Australian Television Production Fund. By establishing this fund the Government intends to give Australians access to a wider range of high quality Australian programs. The fund will provide the television production industry with \$20 million per annum with the aim of increasing Australian content, strengthening the industry at large and providing

it with support at the onset of the new communications era. The fund will operate from the next financial year for a period of three years. Programs financed by the fund will not count for quotas required under Australian content rules. In this way, the fund will increase the amount of quality Australian programming on television. At least ten per cent of the fund will be spent on productions eligible for children's programming which will satisfy the ABA's C classification requirement.

The ABA has been asked by the Government to consult with relevant groups and report on the structure and operations of the fund to the Minister by February 1995.

### **PAY TV—AUSTRALIAN CONTENT**

The Broadcasting Services Act requires pay TV operators of a predominantly drama service to devote at least ten per cent of their program expenditure on new Australian drama programs. According to *Creative Nation*, the Government will review this minimum once services have commenced and may increase the level to 20 per cent.

*Creative Nation* also discusses children's programming, contemporary music, commercial radio, community broadcasting and Aboriginal broadcasting, in particular the development of a Statement of Principles for Media Reporting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues.

*Creative Nation* also examines multimedia issues and accessing and promoting Australian information and cultural resources worldwide using networked information services. ☐

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